

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) recognized National Fire Prevention Week (October 7-13) by paying tribute to fire service personnel and emphasizing this year's fire prevention theme - the importance of developing and practicing a home fire escape plan. Rep. Hoyer, Co-chair of the Congressional Fire Caucus, will attend the 26th National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service with President Bush this Sunday in Emmitsburg, MD.

"This Sunday, I will have the honor of speaking at the 26th National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service to commemorate to those firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty. On this occasion, we will memorialize 91 fallen firemen and women, their deaths a grave testament to the dangerous and sometimes fatal nature of the fire service.

"Every day, our volunteer and career firefighters provide an unbelievable service and sacrifice a great deal to protect our communities. In 2006, U.S. fire departments nationwide responded to 396,000 home fires. These fires caused 2,580 civilian deaths, 12,500 civilian injuries and \$6.8 billion in direct damage. Although tragic, these numbers would no doubt have been far greater were it not for the dedicated service of our first responders.

"And we recall too, how on that fateful day of September 11, 2001, firefighters were among the first on the scene at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and in the fields outside Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Their heroic efforts saved lives that day, but it is also what the firemen and women do on a daily basis that defines the invaluable service they provide.

"These brave protectors are responsible for leading both defensive and offensive efforts to ensure the safety of our homes and communities. They are the trained professionals ready to respond at the first sign of distress, and they are the front line in the event of an emergency.

"The fire service also relies on public education campaigns to raise awareness about the measures citizens can take in safeguarding against fires in their homes and places of business. It can be said, after all, that there is no better protection against fires than the prevention of fires.

"Every year, fire safety advocates make a big awareness push around National Fire Prevention Week – this year from October 7-13. During this week, we join with our Nation's first

responders to help prevent fires and ensure the safety of our homes and communities. The focus of this year's campaign is on the importance of developing and practicing a fire escape plan for you and your family.

“According to a poll by the National Fire Protection Association, only 66 percent have actually developed a home fire escape plan to ensure they could escape quickly and safely. And of those who have a plan, only 35 percent have actually practiced it. It is simply not enough to have a plan. You must be confident that it can be implemented.

“For our part, Congress has, and will, continue to champion initiatives to improve the safety and well being of our nation's firefighters and to enhance their ability to protect our communities. And as a Co-chair of the Congressional Fire Caucus, I will continue to work to ensure that our firefighters have the staff, equipment and training that they need to keep their departments running safely and efficiently.

“Finally, National Fire Prevention Week isn't just about fire safety. It is a tribute to the men and women who keep our communities safe from fire all year long. It is a tribute to the bravery and sacrifices of all those now waiting for the fire alarm to ring in firehouses across our nation. The contributions of these heroes to ensuring the safety of their country and their communities cannot be overstated.”

For more fire safety tips and information on National Fire Prevention Week, you can visit [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org).

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